

Tribute to Riaz Mohammad Khan

Riaz Mohammad Khan Foreign Affairs Secretary has been discharged unceremoniously for his opposing Benazir Bhutto's murder through a UN commission. Since quite some time national affairs are run on one's personal liking or disliking and not on national interest. Take example that except for a small minority the whole nation desired restoration of Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Choudhry. His reinstatement has however become General Musharraf's psychological weakness. He is ready to restore all judges but since he hates Justice Choudhry he can not restore him. Justice Choudhry is a matter of personal ego and hate for Zardari as Justice Choudhry did not grant him bail. Riaz Mohammad Khan Foreign Affairs Secretary is victim of similar personal disliking as Zardari does not like anyone who has courage to say a word against his own wish like any contrary comments on formation of UN Commission. On his discharge more than two dozens articles from senior writers have appeared praising the diplomatic profession ability of Khan. These articles and comments state how successfully Khan brought a historic breakthrough in Pakistan India peace talks only second day of his assuming office launching Muzaffarabad Srinagar bus service. He successfully handled in Pakistan's favor controversial Baglihar Dam issue.

It has been quoted in these articles that Khan was a man of principle and never lived like a "Yes Minister" but commented only what was in the interest of the community. I do not know much about him but I am too personally convinced of his foresight and diplomatic intelligence. In March 2006 the Pakistan Embassy Bahrain issued an explanation seeking letter to the Principal of Pakistan School Bahrain. He was asked to explain as to why the Indian Ambassador was present in the school in a ceremony. The Principal was asked to bring his explanation along with his own and family passports. It was a sign for deporting the Principal from Bahrain. The then Ambassador Iftikhar Kazmi and Deputy Head Shaukat Moqaddam actually wanted to harass the Principal so that in harassment the Principal sides with these officials, divulge school information. The school had a big fund about seven lakhs Bahrain Dinars (one Dinar equal to Pak. Rupees 170) and this fund was an eye sore for many.

The School Board comprising respected citizens unlike the Pakistani diplomats had more vision to foresee what bad would happen if the Principal was deported. The Board members knowing that Riaz Khan Foreign Affairs Secretary was a true diplomat brought the matter to his personal notice. The Board apprised Khan that the function was held in the School premises on the request of Toastmaster International Bahrain Chapter which is a universal Forum. Toastmaster International has affiliated branches all over the world. In Bahrain there were many Toastmaster Clubs. The Indians had largest number. Many years back the then Pakistan Ambassador desired that there should also be a Pakistani youth toastmaster club. The Head of Toastmaster Bahrain Chapter a good Pakistani established then the Pakistan young students toastmaster club in Pakistan School. The Toastmaster

Bahrain Chapter with which all local Toastmaster Clubs are attached holds functions frequently at members premises and

hotels. This time it selected the auditorium of Pakistan School. The Toastmaster Bahrain Chapter bears all expenses for such functions and make its own arrangements including inviting guests at its own. It invited guests for this functions including many Ambassadors like Philippines Ambassador, Bangladesh Ambassador and other Ambassadors and VIPs. The School Board informed Khan that it can formally ask the Toastmaster Bahrain Chapter to verify that it was their function and all the guests including Indian Ambassador were invited by it and that the Pakistan School only provided its auditorium for the purpose. The very wise diplomat Khan as was expected immediately sensed the personal non sense of the Embassy official and the diplomatic and media danger involved in the stupid move of the Embassy. He realized that if the School Board asked the Toastmaster Bahrain Chapter for such a verification, the matter will come out in the knowledge of middle east hostile press that while

General Musharraf was loudly wishing friendship with India, its diplomats were terminating the services of a Pakistani Principal for the only sin that Indian Ambassador was seen in the school. The interesting is that only two days after this school function, the Indian Ambassador was present on board the visiting Pakistani navy ship invited by Pakistan Embassy. The Embassy official wanted to see the Principal nervous break down but wise Khan sensed the damage. He took a serious note and ordered to kill the non sense then and there. The popular writer Irfan Hussain who is going to Pakistan High Commission U.K as Press Minister last week invented a new word "ædrug visas". He described in details giving many examples how some Pakistani Embassies were engaged in issuance of dubious visas which in turn is bringing bad name for Pakistan.